

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A process for eliminating a polymer that is bound to a protein by a thioester of a mercapto group of a cysteine residue of the protein producing a protein-polymer complex, ~~comprising a step of reacting~~ the protein having the polymer conjugated thereto via a thioester of a mercapto group of a cysteine residue of said the protein with a compound having a mercapto group to eliminate the polymer from the cysteine residue.
2. (previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the protein conjugated with a polymer is obtained by reacting a protein having a cysteine residue with an activated polymer.
3. (original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the polymer is polyalkylene oxide.
4. (original) The process according to claim 3, wherein the polymer is polyethylene glycol.
5. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the compound having a mercapto group is dithiothreitol, dithioerythritol, 2-mercaptoethanol, reduced glutathione or N-acetyl-L-cysteine.
6. (original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the compound having a mercapto group is dithiothreitol or 2-mercaptoethanol.
7. (original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the protein is an enzyme.
8. (original) The process according to claim 7, wherein the enzyme contains a cysteine residue in an active center.
9. (original) The process according to claim 8, wherein the enzyme is methioninase, papain or transglutaminase.
10. (original) The process according to claim 1, wherein average 0.7 to 1.3 molecules of a polymer are eliminated per 1 subunit of a protein.

11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) The process according to claim 1, wherein the ~~protein-polymer complex-protein~~ having a polymer that is bound to a protein by a thioester of a mercapto group of a cysteine residue of the protein is a methioninase-polyethylene glycol complex, papain-polyethylene glycol complex or transglutaminase-polyethylene glycol complex.

13. - 15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)